

**CATAWBA COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**  
**ANNEX L**  
**SHELTER AND MASS CARE**

**I. PURPOSE**

This annex provides for the protection of the population from the effects of hazards through the identification of shelters and provision of mass care and social services in shelters.

**II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

A. Situation

1. Based upon the County's hazard analysis, there are several emergencies for which shelters may be required including severe storms, tornadoes, floods, hazardous material accidents, fires and fixed nuclear facility incidents.
2. The Catawba County Emergency Management Office and the American Red Cross have identified and surveyed potential shelters in the county and have determined which would be appropriate to use during disasters.

B. Assumptions

1. Sufficient in-county sheltering exists to meet the needs of an evacuation during emergencies or disaster.
2. For out-of-county evacuation, sufficient shelter capacity exists in adjacent counties and shelter locations can be arranged and made available.
3. A high percentage of evacuees will seek shelter with friends or relatives rather than go to public shelter.

**III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

- A. The North Carolina Department Human Resources Resources through the NC Division of Social Services (NCDSS) and the Catawba County Department of Social Services (County DSS) is responsible for shelter and mass care matters. The American Red Cross (ARC) through written agreement with the State of North Carolina and Catawba County Emergency Management through NC General Statute 166A-9, will provide shelter and mass care to the general population. The Department of Human Resources will assure that shelter care is made available to complement American Red Cross services, and in those situations in which American Red Cross cannot provide shelter and mass care.
- B. The Department of Human Resources will support county social services efforts, arrange for shelters at DHR institutions, and transfer social services personnel to the affected area as needed. DHR will work in conjunction with the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and volunteer organizations to provide care for disaster victims.
- C. The Catawba County Emergency Management Coordinator and the American Red Cross will coordinate shelter location. Operations will mutually be supported with shared personnel and support services of American Red Cross and Catawba County Department of Social Services whenever possible.
- D. Public and private providers of institutional care (medical and residential) remain responsible for having shelter plans, which are approved by Catawba County Social Services and Emergency Management Office, for continued care of their clientele when in shelters.

#### **IV. DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

- A. The Director of Social Services will coordinate with American Red Cross on shelter/mass care operations for the County.
- B. The American Red Cross will direct and control ARC shelter/mass care operations in conjunction with Catawba County Social Services.
- C. Assumption of financial responsibility dictates direction and control.

## **V. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT**

The line of succession for shelter and mass care is:

1. Director of American Red Cross
2. Director of the Catawba County Social Services
3. Catawba County Emergency Management Coordinator

**ANNEX L**  
**APPENDIX 1**  
**SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTERING AND CARE**

**I. PURPOSE**

This Appendix annex provides for the protection of the special needs groups in the general population from the effects of hazards through the identification of special needs shelters.

**II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

**A. Situation**

1. North Carolina has within the general population, special needs individuals and special needs groups that will require individual and/or special assistance in the event evacuation is required.
2. Some persons with special needs may, with minimal assistance, be able to function in a mass care shelter, while those persons with special health needs requiring constant care and/or life support systems, will require a special needs shelter or a medical facility.

**B. Assumptions**

1. Any person with special needs for whom care can be provided by that person or by family members should be accepted in the shelter serving his family and his community.
2. Sheltering for special needs will be unique to the county and the special needs shelter may be in a separate designated area of a building housing a mass care shelter, or in a separate facility depending on the resources available in the county.
3. Private and government operated residential facilities caring for special needs groups, such as nursing homes, rest homes, group homes for the mentally ill or developmentally disabled, etc., are responsible for their clients continual care during and after the time an evacuation is authorized to include financial responsibility.

4. Private and government operated facilities caring for special needs groups for less than 24 hours, such as day care, pre-school, day health, are responsible for their clients continual care during and after an evacuation is authorized until or unless the client is released to a parent or a responsible adult.

### **III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

- A. Sheltering for special needs populations will be accomplished through the coordinated efforts of private facilities, governmental agencies, and county-to-county mutual aid agreements.
- B. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) has lead responsibility for sheltering and mass care in North Carolina. Within DHR, the Division of Social Services (DSS), and Catawba County Department of Social Services (County DSS) are designated as the lead agencies to insure that shelter care is provided for special needs groups. This will involve team planning for special needs shelters with public agencies, private facilities, and the medical profession.
- C. The local emergency management coordinator will assist county DSS and other local agencies with issues related to special needs sheltering, including coordination of operation of special needs shelters when a publicly operated special needs shelter is necessary.
- D. Divisions under the Department of Human Resources that operate residential facilities are required to have current plans in place for the evacuation and sheltering of special needs populations. Any (residential) facility for local groups must have prior approval of DHR.
- E. Private facilities will be responsible for the evacuation and sheltering of their patients, to include transport to and from shelters.
- F. Sheltering needs of special needs groups may be met: in the county if an appropriate facility is available; in adjoining counties; with prior approval from DHR in certain DHR state operated facilities; or, in shelters administered by county departments of social services.

#### **IV. DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

1. The Director of Social Services will direct and control special needs shelter operations for the public.
2. Private facilities will be responsible for direction and control of their shelters, or if housed in government provided space, for their clients, subject to overall direction and control of the public shelter operator.
3. Department of Human Resources will provide direction and control for agency facilities.